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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/618)*]

53/116. Traffic in women and girls

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[2] the International Covenants on Human Rights,[3] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[4] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[5] and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,[6]

Recalling the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others,[7]

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[3] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[4] Resolution 39/46, annex.

[5] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[6] Resolution 48/104.

[7] Resolution 317 (IV).

Reaffirming the provisions of the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993,[8] the International Conference on Population and Development,[9] the World Summit for Social Development,[10] the Fourth World Conference on Women[11] and the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995,[12] pertaining to the traffic in women and girls,

Recalling its resolution 52/98 of 12 December 1997 on traffic in women and girls,

Welcoming the inclusion of gender-related crimes in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17 July 1998 by the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court,[13]

Recalling the agreed conclusions on violence against women adopted on 13 March 1998 by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session,[14] Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/30 of 17 April 1998,[15] the recommendations of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery adopted by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights at its fiftieth session, in August 1998,[16] and resolutions adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice relating to trafficking in women and girls,

Taking note of the decision of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its seventh session[17] that the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee for the purpose of elaborating of a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime, to be established by the General Assembly, would discuss, *inter alia*, the elaboration of an international instrument addressing trafficking in women and children,

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[8] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[9] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[10] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[11] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[12] See A/CONF.169/16/Rev.1.

[13] A/CONF.183/9.

[14] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/1998/27 and Corr.1), chap. I.

[15] Ibid., *Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[16] E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/L.11/Add.1, chap. II, sect. A, resolution 1998/19, and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/14, sect. VI.B.

[17] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 10* and corrigendum (E/1998/30 and Corr.1) chap. I, sect. B.

Reaffirming that sexual violence and trafficking in women and girls for purposes of economic exploitation, sexual exploitation through prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation and contemporary forms of slavery are serious violations of human rights,

Noting with concern the increasing number of women and girl children from developing countries and from some countries with economies in transition who are being trafficked to developed countries as well as within and between regions and States, and acknowledging that the problem of trafficking also includes the victimizing of young boys,

Welcoming bilateral and regional cooperation mechanisms and initiatives to address the problem of trafficking in women and girls, and taking note of the proposed draft convention on preventing and combating trafficking in women and children for the purposes of prostitution of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation,[18]

Underlining the importance of systematic data collection in determining the extent and nature of the problem of trafficking in women and girls,

Emphasizing the need for more sustained and coordinated national, subregional, regional, interregional and international action to combat trafficking in women and girls,

Deeply concerned about the unabated use of new information technologies, including the Internet, for purposes of prostitution, child pornography, paedophilia, trafficking in women as brides and sex tourism,

Stressing once again the need for Governments to provide standard humanitarian treatment to trafficked persons consistent with human rights standards,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in women and girls;[19]

2. *Welcomes* national, regional and international efforts to implement the recommendations of the World Congress against Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children,[20] and calls upon Governments to take further measures in that regard;

3. *Urges* Governments to continue their efforts to implement the provisions on trafficking in women and girls contained in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women[21] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights;[8]

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[18] See South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, document SAARC/Summit.10/CM.20/3.

[19] A/53/409.

[20] *World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Stockholm, 27-31 August 1996, Final Report of the Congress*, two volumes (Stockholm, Government of Sweden, January 1997).

[21] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

4. *Encourages* Governments to intensify their efforts to implement the policy recommendations and strategies on trafficking in women and girls contained in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, in particular the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others[22] adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session, taking into account the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences in her reports to the Commission at its fifty-third[23] and fifty-fourth[24] sessions, and those of the human rights treaty bodies relating to the traffic in women and girls;

5. *Encourages* Member States to conclude bilateral, subregional, regional and international agreements to address the problem of trafficking in women and girls;

6. *Also encourages* Member States to strengthen cooperation through information-sharing of experience, best practices and lessons learned through, *inter alia*, consultation mechanisms, such as the regional consultation process organized in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to take appropriate measures to address the root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriages and forced labour, so as to eliminate trafficking in women, including by strengthening existing legislation with a view to providing better protection of the rights of women and girls and to punishing perpetrators, through both criminal and civil measures;

8. *Calls upon* all Governments to criminalize trafficking in women and girls in all its forms, to condemn and penalize all those offenders involved, including intermediaries, whether their offence was committed in their own or in a foreign country, while ensuring that the victims of those practices are not penalized, and to penalize persons in authority found guilty of sexually assaulting victims of trafficking in their custody;

9. *Urges* concerned Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, to support and allocate resources for programmes to strengthen preventive action, in particular education and campaigns to increase public awareness of the issue at the national and grass-roots levels;

10. *Encourages* Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, to undertake campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration so as to enable women to make informed decisions and to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking;

11. *Also encourages* Governments to intensify collaboration with non-governmental organizations to develop and implement programmes for effective counselling, training and reintegration into society of victims of trafficking, and programmes that provide shelter and helplines to victims or potential victims;

12. *Invites* Governments to take steps, including witness protection programmes, to enable women who are victims of trafficking to make complaints to the police and to be available when required by the

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[22] See E/CN.4/Sub.2/1995/28/Add.1.

[23] E/CN.4/1997/47 and Add.1-4.

[24] E/CN.4/1998/54 and Add.1.

criminal justice system, and to ensure that during this time women have access to social, medical, financial and legal assistance, and protection, as appropriate;

13. *Encourages* Governments to take effective and expeditious measures, particularly the enactment or amendment, if necessary, of domestic legislation to provide appropriate penalties, such as substantial imprisonment, fines and forfeiture, in order to combat all aspects of organized criminal activities related to trafficking at the international level in women and children;

14. *Invites* Governments to encourage Internet service providers to adopt or strengthen self-regulatory measures to promote the responsible use of the Internet with a view to eliminating trafficking in women and girls;

15. *Encourages* Governments to develop systematic data-collection methods and to update continuously information on trafficking in women and girls, including the analysis of the modus operandi of trafficking syndicates;

16. *Urges* Governments to strengthen national programmes to combat trafficking in women and girls through sustained bilateral, regional and international cooperation, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices, and invites Governments, United Nations bodies and organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to undertake collaborative and joint research and studies on traffic in women and girls that can serve as a basis for policy formulation or change;

17. *Invites* Governments, once again, with the support of the United Nations, to formulate training manuals for law enforcement and medical personnel and judicial officers who handle cases of trafficked women and girls, taking into account current research and materials on traumatic stress and gender-sensitive counselling techniques, with a view to sensitizing them to the special needs of victims;

18. *Invites* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[2] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[5] and the International Covenants on Human Rights[3] to include information and statistics on trafficking in women and girls as part of their national reports to their respective committees;

19. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to continue to address, within their respective mandates, the problem of trafficking in women and girls as a priority concern and to recommend, in their reports, measures to combat such phenomena;

20. *Reiterates* its call upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in addressing the obstacles to the realization of the human rights of women, in particular through her contacts with the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, to include the traffic in women and girls among her priority concerns;

21. *Welcomes* the initiatives and activities of United Nations bodies and organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to combat trafficking in women and girls, and invites them to strengthen their activities in this context;

22. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to continue to address the issue as part of the integrated follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to compile, as reference and guidance, successful interventions and strategies in addressing the various dimensions of the problem of trafficking in women and girls based on reports, research and other materials within and outside the United Nations and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

85th plenary meeting
9 December 1998